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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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January 17, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCONE

SUBJECT: National Reconnaissance Program

Enclosed herewith is a proposed letter confirming the CIA-DoD agreement for handling the National Reconnaissance Program. If you wish, I will be glad to get together with you to discuss this paper later in the day, perhaps at your house on my way home.

Enclosure

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Dear Mr. McCone:

This letter confirms our agreement with respect to the modification of the agreement of September 6, 1961 between the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense with respect to the setting up of a National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) and the arrangements for dealing both with the management and operation of this program and the handling of the intelligence product of the program on a covert basis.

1. The NRP consists of all satellite and overflight reconnaissance projects whether overt or covert. It includes all photographic projects for intelligence geodesy and mapping purposes, and electronic signal collection projects for electronic signal intelligence and communications intelligence resulting therefrom.
2. The Director of Central Intelligence, through the USIB, will establish or validate all requirements for the NRP and will establish its broad project and overall target priorities.
3. The Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense will jointly provide policy and program guidance and managerial direction for the NRP. The Secretary of Defense, acting as Executive Agent for the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency, will manage, operate and maintain the security of the NRP in accordance with the joint decisions of the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense.
4. There will be established on a covert basis within the Department of Defense a National Reconnaissance Office to manage and operate the NRP. This office will be under the direction of the Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense (DOD/AR), whose appointment will be subject to the approval of the Director of Central Intelligence, and who will be delegated full authority to act for the Secretary of Defense

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in carrying out his responsibilities as Executive Agent for the management and operation of the NRP. This office will include a small special staff whose personnel will be drawn from the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. This office will have direct control over all elements of the total program.

5. The functions and responsibilities of the Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense are set forth in Attachment "A" hereto.

6. Upon the approval of this agreement by the President, the agreement of September 6, 1961, hereinabove referred to, will be superseded.

If the foregoing is in accord with your understanding of our agreement, I would appreciate it if you would kindly sign and return the enclosed copy of this letter.

Sincerely,

1 Atch.

Functions and Responsibilities
of the National Reconnaissance
Office ~~(TS)~~

Honorable John A. McCone
Director
Central Intelligence Agency

CONCUR:

APPROVED:

Director
Central Intelligence Agency ~~TOP SECRET~~

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Functions and Responsibilities
of the
National Reconnaissance Office (NS)

Reference:

- (a) Deputy Secretary of Defense TOP SECRET memorandum,
subject: Space Vehicle Electronics Intelligence
Program, dated October 20, 1961, with attachment.

Definitions:

- NRO - National Reconnaissance Office.
- MRP - National Reconnaissance Program, to consist
of all overt and covert satellite and over-
flight projects for intelligence, geodasy
and mapping photography and electronic signal
collection.
- DGE/AR - Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary
of Defense.
- CIA - The Central Intelligence Agency
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- AOC - Aircraft Operations Center - Air Force operations office within the Pentagon for control of special aircraft operations.
- MOG - Mission Operations Group - A part of the NRO in the Pentagon which plans specific missions, determines targets to be covered by specific missions, and exercises NRO operational control during missions, through the [REDACTED] C.

Policy:

The following plan outlines basic policy for the establishment of functions and responsibilities within the National Reconnaissance Office to insure that the particular talents, experience and capabilities within the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency are fully and most effectively utilized in the establishment, management and conduct of the National Reconnaissance Program.

1. Management

a. The technical management responsibility for all NRP projects (overt and covert) is assigned to the DOD/AR.

(1) To provide for full use of available capabilities and resources, and to provide for interface with data

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exploitation equipment development by agencies outside the NRO, Army, Navy and Air Force representatives will be assigned, on a full-time basis, to appropriate positions within the NRO under the DOD/AR. They will be technically qualified in electronic signal collection work and in mapping and geodesy, respectively, and have NRO project responsibilities in these areas.

(2) A firm liaison channel between the NRO and NSA will be established as an adjunct to the technical management structure of signal collection projects, and the conduct of such projects carried out in accordance with the NSA responsibilities described in reference (a). Planning will encompass maximum utilization of the Navy technical resources to support the electronic signal collection programs.

b. Financial Management

(1) With respect to funds, the DOD/AR will be responsible for all projects of the NRP. Funds will be allocated on an individual project basis [REDACTED]

(2) With respect to contracts, all NRP project contracts will be the responsibility of DOD/AR, as a necessary

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corollary to the assignment of technical management responsibility to DOD/AR. However, covert ("black") contracts which provide cover for or enhance the security of specific projects may be the responsibility of the CIA when the DOD/AR and the Director of CIA, or his nominee, agree that such action offers a preferable route. This includes estab-

[REDACTED] to provide cover for covert operations, and any other contractual action which is necessary for the NRP and which can be provided in a preferred manner by the Agency.

2. Security

The DOD/AR will be responsible for the overall security policy for the National Reconnaissance Program. Under this overall policy, security of the NRP will be administered for DOD by DOD/AR, through control officers in the JCS, Army, Air Force, and Navy staffs, the DIA and the NSA, and for the CIA by its Director, or his nominee. For the collection programs, final need-to-know validation authority will be the responsibility of DOD/AR.

3. Operations

a. Scheduling. The mission schedule for all NRP

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efforts will be the sole responsibility of DOD/AR, including the obtaining of appropriate clearances where required.

b. Mission Operations

(1) A member of the DOD/AR office will be designated as chairman of a Mission Operations Group (MOG) which will have Tri-Service, NSA and CIA representation on a full-time basis. The MOG will have available the complete schedules and technical capabilities of all of the sensor systems of all NRP projects, and accounts of the complete coverage obtained by all sensor systems of these projects, on a continuous basis. This group will establish the pre-launch targeting selection for all reconnaissance projects of the NRP, and will transmit this information to a secure operations control room [REDACTED] for satellite missions, and to the OAC for aircraft missions. The operations control room at [REDACTED] will control all satellite missions, responding to operational decisions from the MOG in Washington, and engineering decisions from the project director [REDACTED]

(2) The officer in charge of the operations control room at the [REDACTED] will be sole responsible agent to DOD/AR to assure necessary actions with the mission vehicle as

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well as with the ground environment to maximize the probability of carrying out the mission in conformance with instructions of the MOG. Any required functions relating to vehicle and payload operation during a mission, such as piggy-backs, orbit or route changes, filters, etc., will be the sole responsibility of the officer in charge of the [REDACTED] or AOC control room.

(3) To provide a basis for the continuous operation of the MOG, there will be in the Pentagon a comprehensive display so that the MOG can monitor each mission and make decisions based on all factors involved, such as weather, target coverage, change in mission situation, political situation, or new intelligence data. The initial decision as to which targets to cover with each specific mission will be made by the MOG and will be based on information from this display. The MOG will make all targeting decisions during satellite missions, and give appropriate instructions to the project director at [REDACTED] this regard. Decisions based on engineering factors will be provided by the project director at the [REDACTED] and will override conflicting instructions from the MOG. Responsibility for all functions of the MOG will rest with the DOD/AR, who will provide the chairman of the MOG.

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c. Formatting

The DOD/AR will be responsible for the formatting of the collected NRP product as follows:

(1) Photographic formatting will include the initial chemical processing, titling, production and delivery to the users as specified by the USIB.

(2) Electronic signal data formatting will include the decommutation, conversion, technical correction and reconstruction of the collected signal data to yield a usable collection product. DOD/AR will deliver the formatted collection product, together with associated data necessary for exploitation, to the NSA or other user as specified by the USIB.

d. Engineering Analysis

The DOD/AR will be responsible for engineering analysis of all collection systems to correct the problems that exist on the operating system as well as to provide information for new systems.

4. The primary responsibility for advanced plans (post CY 1962) for all NRP projects is assigned to the DOD/AR.

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5. In accordance with the requirements and broad project and overall target priorities established by the Director of Central Intelligence, the DOD/AR will determine schedules and targets for particular missions. Target decisions during conduct of missions will be made by the MRO by means of the MOC previously described, using USIB requirements, priorities and target lists.

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